

LYRICS OF NEW ENGLAND
AND OTHER POEMS

JOHN H. FLAGG

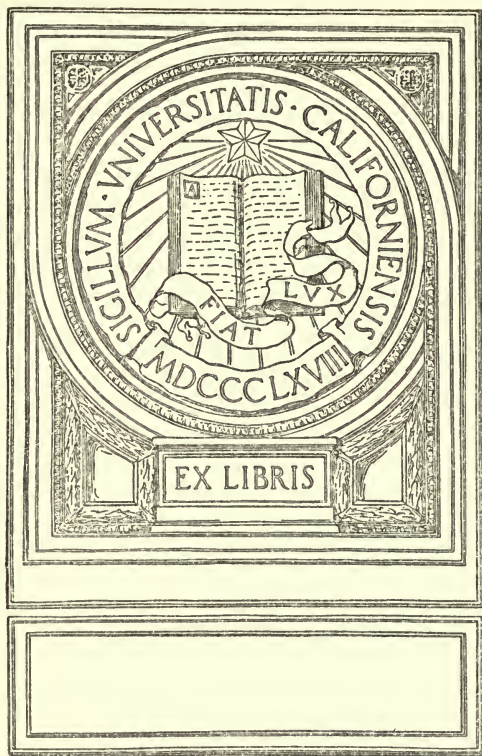
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Col. Albert Clarke,

With unfailing Regards of
The Author.

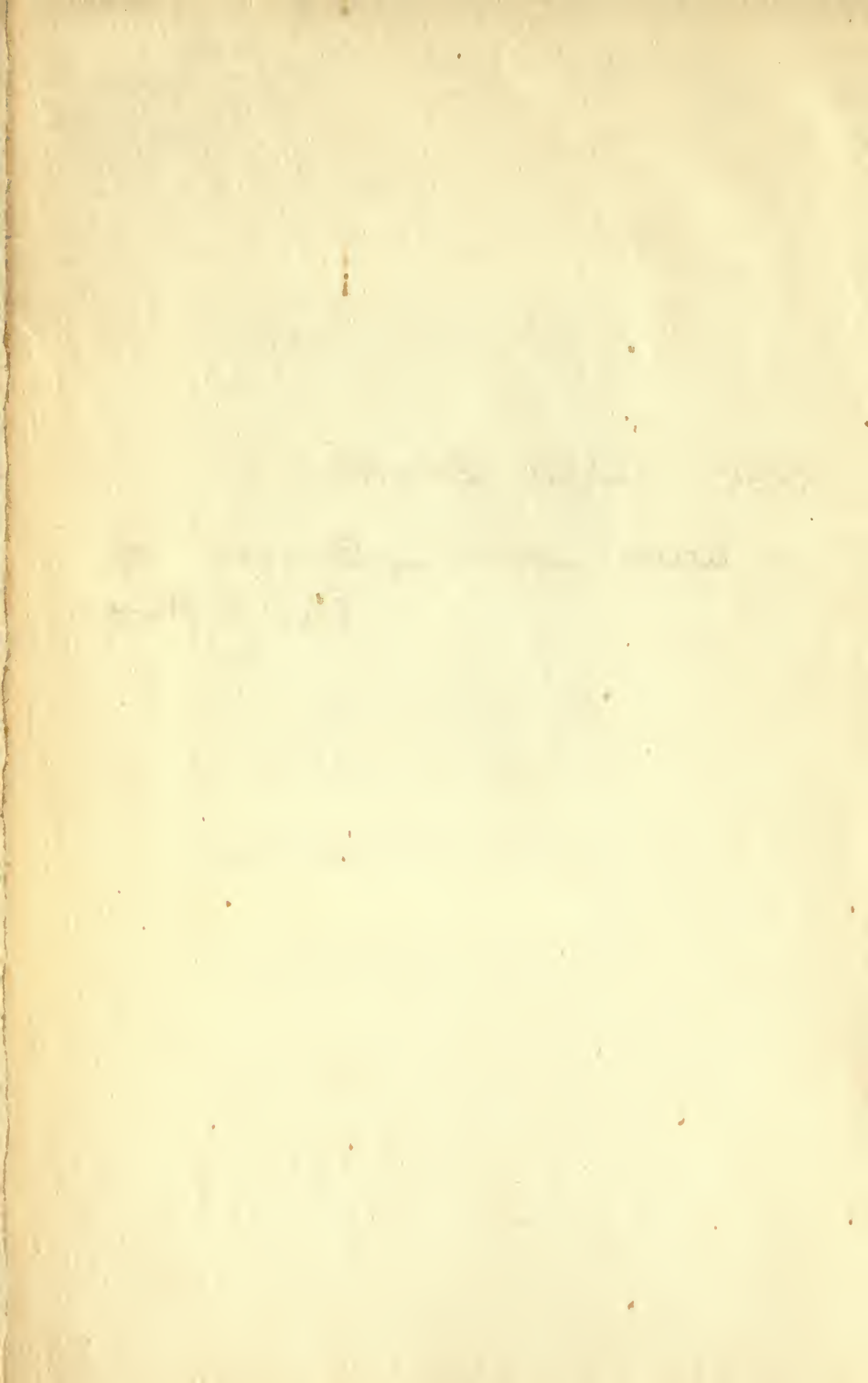


PLATE 1

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AND
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BY
JOHN H. FLAGG
II



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1909

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TO VIRU
AMROTLAC

*To Edward Quintard, by whose skilful
service as a physician and unfailing devo-
tion as a friend I have been made a double
debtor, these pages are inscribed in lasting
gratitude*

J. H. F.

PREFACE

This volume is the outgrowth of a smaller one, privately printed, in 1902, under title of the "*Monarch*," and intended solely for presentation as a Christmas salutation to personal friends of the author. Requests for copies having long since exhausted that limited edition, he has been urged to publish a new volume, to embrace not only the numbers contained in the former one, but others that have since been written. Hence the present volume.

The author hopes that whosoever may honor him by its perusal will deal charitably with its admitted shortcomings, in view of the untoward conditions under which the work was undertaken — conditions well understood by those for whom the book was primarily intended. The continued request for copies of the earlier edition is accepted as an assurance that hitherto this has been graciously accorded, and it is now asked that only like indulgence may be extended to this later work of

THE AUTHOR

114 West Fifty-eighth Street,
New York, October, 1909

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POEMS



CHILDHOOD'S HOME

I drempt of busy childhood days, where sun-
shine ever clung,
Back in my country home again, when this old
heart was young —
Through one brief hour of ecstasy, when every
thought was bliss,
With every care forsaken, what spell could be
like this!

My ravished eyes sought every place — each
object they once knew —
With nothing changed in all these years and
nothing added new —
Transfixed I stood amid the scenes so long ob-
scured from sight,

As through the windows shone, methought, a
consecrated light.

I saw my mother's flower-pots upon the win-
dow-sill,

Wherein grew sweet geraniums that drooped
with thirst until

At sunset she would sprinkle them, and fondle
each with care —

Methought, to gladden my return, their frag-
rance was still there.

I saw the old melodeon that many an eve I'd
heard

In hymns led by my mother's voice that hal-
lowed every word.

This, long since, joined the choir unseen, in an-
thems sung on high:

I sometimes think I hear it now, through cloud-
rifts in the sky.

In yonder nook — its custom'd place — stood
 father's old oak chair,
Descended from ancestral lines — a gift from
 heir to heir:
As if to stay each stranger hand, and shield it
 from all harm,
A spider here had spun its web, outstretched
 from arm to arm.

How often here I'd clambered to my father's
 waiting knee,
To hear his thrilling stories of brave deeds on
 land and sea —
Of Indian scalpers on the plains, of pirates
 fierce and bold,
Of hunters' daring for wild beasts — and those
 who delve for gold.

Here was the book-case just as when, at restful
 evening time,

I searched the well-worn volumes through for
picture or for rhyme,
Since for plain books I did not care — they
baffled me with lore —
And every one I tried to read I found to be a
bore.

There hung the quaint old mirror still, just
where it hung before,
When I had gazed on my first suit, bought at
the village store;
And donning once my brother's clothes to it
I straightway ran,
To see how big and brave I'd look when I be-
came a man.

There stood the same old kitchen stove, where
many a nipping day,
I'd held my freezing, outstretched hands when
I came in from play.

This good old friend had one grave fault — it
burned out wood so fast —
I hourly lugged an armful in until the cold
months passed.

Here hour by hour would mother give her
patient, willing toil,
To make the good things for us all that care-
less cooks might spoil;
Who made for me plump turnovers, and cookies
by the score,
And yet I claimed I grew so fast, I needed just
one more.

There peered the old remorseless clock that
watched me, argus-eyed,
And when my bed-time hour arrived my pati-
ence oft had tried.
'Twas then I knew it ran too fast, while mother
claimed 'twas slow; —

Whatever my contention was, I always had to
go —

Go to my far-off, attic bed, when mother led the
way,

Whose candle and assuring words my fears did
not allay.

She bore away the candle, after kissing me
good-night,

But all through life I've felt that kiss, and seen
that vanished light.

There hung the same old ample shelf that we
called "father's own,"

Where he kept Bible, pipe and pen, yet all "odd
things" were thrown,

Plus "The Old Farmer's Almanac," where we
were blandly told,

To "Look — about — this — time — for —
squalls" — which *prophecy* controlled.

When lo, I heard the rattling hail upon the win-
dow-pane,

Forewarning that dread winter days were steal-
ing back again:

Thanksgiving was approaching, too — that boon
from old Cape Cod —

Ordained by pious Pilgrim sires, in gratefulness
to God.

And whistling then for dear “old Jack,” he
bounded to my side —

That noble, true, confiding friend — my com-
rade and my pride;

Where'er I strayed, he, too, must go — I al-
ways felt his touch —

'Twas hard to call him but a brute, he knew
and felt so much.

Together then we wandered down through our
old sugar-place,

Towards the brook and old mill-hole, where oft
I'd bobbed for dace,
And once had "hooked" a wise old trout, and
quivered with delight,
Until my line caught on a snag, quite hidden
from my sight.

Throughout that summer, day by day — at
dawn, at noon, at eve —
I vainly angled for that trout more hours than
you'd believe;
But while he thus outwitted me, I learned be-
yond a doubt,
That if on earth there was a sage, it was that
wise old trout.

I woke to find these vanished scenes of child-
hood's cherished hours
A dream of what they once had been, and only
perished flowers;

Yet grateful am I e'en to be thus led through
memory's path,
To pluck with joy such perfumed leaves from
Dreamland's aftermath.

THE BROOK

I am the brook, the nimble brook,
Born in my lone, sequestered nook,
Mid God's untrodden mountain-peaks
Where Nature every language speaks.

Unlike the footed beasts of earth —
So frail and helpless at their birth —
At first I creep, then straightway run,
Ere my first day has scarce begun.

On then I rush with quickened pace
And force my way from place to place,
While other brooklets to me flow
To swell my volume as I go.

The alders nod when I pass by;
The reeds and rushes courtesy;
And where the lilies rise and float
I suck rare nectar from each throat.

And when I'm wearied and depressed,
I loiter at my pools to rest,
But soon press on with doubled haste,
To catch the hours allowed to waste.

When lo, I'm halted on my way,
And shackled lest I break away;
Then like a convict made to toil —
Man deeming that his rightful spoil.

Thus forced, I tread his endless wheel;
I grind his grist, and mould his steel;
His looms I work with tireless hand,
And all his varied arts expand.

If once I break from servitude,
I still am sought, am still pursued;
Where'er I turn, or whither flee,
Man first is there to harness me.

At last, howe'er, I rend the chain
That bound me for his sordid gain,
But not until I've grown ten fold
Since down the mountain-side I bowled.

And soon I wake, as from a dream,
To find myself a tidal stream,
With brackish taste upon my tongue —
Unknown to me when I was young.

And whence this plight; how can it be
That I, impelled towards the sea,
Am forced to turn about each day
And backward trace my former way?

Bewildered by this constant change
(To me so meaningless and strange)
I scarce can tell, howe'er I try,
Just what I am each day, or why.

But hark! I hear the ocean roar
And wonder at my fate in store;
O'erwhelmed I'd be with doubt and fear
Had I not faith that God is near.

My destiny, thus far benign,
Was fashioned by a Hand divine;
On that I always have relied,
And with it every ill defied.

So now, when doomed henceforth to be
A plaything of the fretful sea,
That Hand, found ever at my side,
Will not forsake me, but abide.

ODE TO VERMONT

Thy very name doth symbolize
Thy verdant peaks that proudly rise
As if to buttress with their might
The unpropped dome of heavenly light.

Thy Druid forests still conceal
The eagles that high o'er them wheel,
And shelter well the panting deer
When driven from the open near.

The beauty of thy matchless hills
The ravished eye with rapture fills,
While meadows nestle in between
As if too modest to be seen.

Thy fruitful fields and fertile plains
Bear flocks and herds and bounteous grains;
Where'er the gladdened eye may rest
The husbandman seems doubly blessed.

Thy hillside homes and hamlets all
Proclaim content and thrift withal —
Won by the hardened hand of toil
From thy well-tilled, though rugged soil.

No trembling slave yet breathed thy air
And felt his shackles bind him there,
For by thy ancient Bill of Rights*
All men stand equal on thy heights.

Sons of thy birth, such land is thine;
Where first thy sires reared freedom's shrine;

* Vermont, in July, 1777 — fourteen years anterior to admission into the Union — was first of all the states and territories to prohibit slavery by constitutional provision.

Who vanquished each invading foe,
And swept him back, or laid him low.

Thus to the fittest can we trace
Thy present sturdy, virile race,
And may it ever there remain
To rule as now o'er thy domain.

And for that land, by Heaven caressed,
Where all are free, and none oppressed,
Thank well those sires whose master hand
Built from thy rock, and not thy sand,

And guard with more than pious care
Thy heritage, as trusted heir,
So that forever here shall be
The mountain home of liberty!

A NEW ENGLAND TWILIGHT

'Tis Nature's chosen hour for rest,
When all is calm within her breast;
When Day still leaves a friendly light
To guide the footsteps of the Night;

When, one by one, a silent star
Peers through some portal left ajar,
While languid beams the pallid moon
As if reviving from a swoon.

The cows, long since, in lagging train
Came browsing down the pasture lane,
To yield their tribute unaware,
In turn for scanty keep and care.

The housewife spreads the frugal meal;
The pigs for theirs are heard to squeal,
While from her stall the old gray mare
Neighs loudly for her well-earned share.

The bat, which all the day hath hung,
Unhooks himself from where he clung,
And with the swallows debonair
Flits here and there and everywhere.

The whippoorwill now comes to fill
Our souls with deeper rapture still,
Whose song, suppressed throughout the day,
But sweeter makes his evening lay.

The turkeys take to roost like troops
In dressed-up lines — not huddled groups —
While night-hawks far above them fly —
The sole explorers of the sky.

The orchestra of croaking frogs
Strikes up among the lowland bogs,
Whereat the fire-flies now advance
And take their partners for the dance.

At length, as darkness deeper grows,
All creatures nestle to repose
Save night's weird sentinel, the owl,
Robed in his monkish cope and cowl,

For Nature's curfew has been rung,
And songbirds have their vespers sung;
No sound the freshening breeze now brings,
Save hurrying midnight's rustling wings.

THE TESTY DEACON

'Twas down in the old Pine Tree state
Where chanced to pass what I relate;
Where pie at every meal is found,
And Yankees at their best abound;

Where, too, they serve their pork and beans
In methods fit for kings and queens,
But where French gastronomic art
Is not in vogue in any part.

'Twas in a rural farming town
That never yet had won renown,
Where dwelt a farmer — Ephraim Hale —
The “hero” of this touching tale.

Now "Deacon Eph," as he was called,
Wore well his years, though long since bald,
And led a fairly righteous life,
Though always testy with his wife.

But she — the counterpart of him —
Indulged his every peevish whim;
So meek and humble had she grown,
That lasting feuds were seldom known.

He therefore found domestic life
A blessed boon with such a wife;
But had she been a grumpy dame
That life might not have been so tame.

Long deacon in the village church,
His name thus far had known no smirch;
This being so, folks thought that he
Was what good deacons all should be.

With Yankee thrift he money made
By raising geese which often strayed
E'en to his neighbor's very door,
And wrecked his garden o'er and o'er.

One day this neighbor — Moses Slade —
Espied them, while in ambush laid,
Each delving like a lusty Turk
To ruin all his spring-time work.

Enraged, he seized each poaching goose,
And ere he turned one of them loose,
Slit through the web between its toes,
And made *one* foot just like a *crow's*.

In panic then they hustled all
To get beyond the garden wall,
And chose the shortest route for home,
With no desire to further roam.

They sought at once — by instinct led —
The near-by pond, where they were bred,
And then proceeded, one by one,
To navigate as often done.

But lo! all calculations failed,
And their aquatic ardor quailed
When round and round their bodies spun,
With not an inch of headway won.

Now one more fault the Deacon had,
Which was a temper, always bad;
And this he lashed with passion's whip,
And made it sting at every clip.

So when he saw his injured geese,
His rage foretold a breach of peace;
He swore that for this dastard trick
He'd have revenge, and have it quick.

Now he had known for many a day
Just where his geese were wont to stray,
For sore complaint had oft been made
Of their foul work, by neighbor Slade.

So, well disguised, the first dark night,
He sought that neighbor's barn for spite,
And from the tail of his old mare
He shaved off every blessed hair.

Now Slade, when piqued, raged like a bear,
(Some thought because he had red hair)
And would the least affront resent
And visit with dire punishment.

And he avowed that he alone
Knew by whose hand the deed was done,
For he'd pursued the freshest trail,
And *that* led straight to Deacon Hale.

“My turn,” he said, “has come at last,
To even up for all the past,
And now I’ll tan his tough old hide,
And drive him from the church beside.”

He therefore sought a magistrate
To whom he did his object state,
Which, (keeping mum about his geese)
Appeared to be the “public peace.”

He then on oath charged Ephraim Hale
With crime, in that he did assail
And mutilate his old bay mare
By cutting off her caudal hair.

He further swore that the offense
Arose from malice, called “prepnese,”
And that the act did violate
The peace and dignity of the State.

He therefore prayed the Court to grant
A warrant for the miscreant,
Which, with a grave, judicial air,
Was signed and issued then and there.

'Twas with much craft that neighbor Slade
On *Saturday*, this charge had made,
So that arrest, if on that night,
Would make still worse the Deacon's plight.

Just at the hour of evening prayers
Went forth the Sheriff unawares
To make arrest of Deacon Hale
And take him to the county jail.

The Deacon answered his loud knock
As struck the hour of eight o'clock,
And warmly bade him enter in,
As if he were his fondest kin.

His mission being soon explained,
The sheriff, as if deeply pained,
The warrant read, in doleful tones,
Oft punctured by the Deacon's groans.

Then Ephraim, who was much enraged,
Tore like a tiger first encaged,
And charged upon "that viper, Slade,"
The outrage of this dastard raid.

Though "Mother Hale" for mercy pled,
And grievous tears abundant shed —
All proved to be of no avail
To save her raving spouse from jail.

Full half that wretched night was o'er,
When swung the Jailor's ponderous door,
Through which the Sheriff quickly passed
Together with his charge, held fast.

The Deacon still with anger burned,
Yet meekly to the Jailor turned
As if his mild, though searching eye,
Betokened welcome sympathy.

“How can,” he shrieked, “one in my plight
Get from this den this very night?”
“Until you’re tried, you must get bail,”
The Jailor said, “or stay in jail.”

“That,” he rejoined, “I’ll do straightway,
And leave this hole ere break of day,
Then with my wife to church I’ll go,
And no one of this scrape shall know.”

“You can’t do that,” the Jailor said,
“For *Justice* lies asleep in bed;
Besides, the Sabbath’s now well on,
And that, in law, is *dies non*.”

The Deacon closing not his eyes
Throughout that night tried to devise
The means whereby he might get bail
And quit, for good, that curséd jail.

That Sabbath day he gave to prayer,
And thoughts of sacred things elsewhere;
His waiting home, his weeping wife,
And church he'd missed not once through life.

When bail, at length, had been obtained,
And Ephraim had his freedom gained,
His homeward journey he began —
A sadder, though much wiser man.

But from the first, in church and out,
Were those who never had a doubt
That somewhere there was evidence
To fix on him that grave offense.

Therefore a meeting of the church
Was called to instigate a search,
And members chosen by "the chair"
Were sent to view the hapless mare.

They found, indeed, an ancient brute
Bereft of caudal growth hirsute,
But not one fact to prove withal,
Who plied the art tonsorial.

And so, their mission having failed,
(A fact which some no doubt bewailed)
There seemed to be no earthly clue
Which they with hope could then pursue.

But while no headway had been won
To show by whom the deed was done,
A *Tramp* came sliding down the mow,
Who told by whom, and when, and how.

He stated that, "On one dark night
While in the barn, appeared a light,"
And that he "watched and saw old Hale
With sheep-shears slash that hoss's tail."

"He knew," he said, "the old cuss well,"
And divers instances did tell,
When from his watch-dogged house he'd fled,
While foraging for needful bread.

From what they thus had seen and heard,
Their souls were shocked and deeply stirred,
And all agreed, with prompt accord,
To put the culprit to the sword,

For now the church was up in arms,
(And for just once, omitted psalms);
Their Deacon was in deep disgrace
And in the church, was out of place.

From office he was then deposed;
His name was dropped, his pew was closed,
And neighbor Slade, more strange than all,
Was chosen deacon through his fall.

That tranquil town had never known
Such tumult as was now upthrown,
And long it was, in church and out,
Before its peace was brought about.

But peace unto these life-long foes
Has also come to end *their* woes;
Not peace begot of passions cooled
In hearts where once a vengeance ruled,

But from their being laid to rest
In the old churchyard's well-scarred breast:
'Tis just because they're *dead*, you see,
That now they dwell in unity!

THE AWAKENING

At length the mystic touch of Spring
Awakes the slumbering forms of earth,
When Nature, 'neath her warming wing,
Imparts her semblance of rebirth.

Each bud now yearns to be a flower
While yet its form is scarce revealed,
And visited by sun and shower
Is fondled by a Hand concealed.

'Tis now that sympathizing Spring
Restores what Autumn bore away,
And in her lavish hand doth bring
The blossoms of exultant May,

Whose breath infuses every breeze
 With odors and perfumes divine,
Drawn from the blossomed apple-trees
 And every fragrant bud and vine.

The wild-geese drag, on tireless wing,
 Their steedless harrow through the sky,
And thus make known that jocund Spring —
 Her apron filled with flowers — draws nigh.

The robins vie with sweetest song
 The bobolinks and orioles —
Sweetest because suppressed so long
 Their carols burst from brimming souls.

We hear the chirp of building birds,
 And cawing of the high-perched crows,
While from the far-off browsing herds,
 The cow-bells' drowsy tinkle flows.

The blackbirds from the meadows cry;
The plover pipes from yonder bogs,
And from the stagnant pool hard by
Rise languorous murmurings of the frogs.

And all these mingled sounds create
A soul-enchancing harmony,
As one by one they undulate
Through Nature's throbbing symphony.

The odors breathed, the sights we see,
The sounds we hear, by day, by night,
Hold us enthralled in reverie,
And in a spell of glad delight.

JUSTIN S. MORRILL

(A SENATOR OF THE UNITED STATES FROM 1867
TO 1899).

READ AT A GATHERING OF HIS FRIENDS AT HIS
RESIDENCE IN WASHINGTON
ON HIS EIGHTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY,
APRIL 14TH, 1893

Like some o'ertowering forest oak that still
Withstands the blasts of four-score years and
more,
While growths of younger years uprooted fall;
Hoary with ripened leaf, yet valiant, strong;
Those rapturous days are once again thine own,
When virgin buds, kissed by the vernal sun,
From joyful lips speak gratitude.
We hail thee now, with fonder, firmer grasp,

Thankful to Him who rules all destinies,
That, well-nigh shivered by the furious blast*
That bent thee low, and made fond hearts de-
spair,

Thou'rt left but stronger by the gale, and still
Canst with thy friends rejoice, this natal day,
To stand on earth, though gazing into heaven!

Thy rest has come. And with thy worth and
fame

So justly earned, nought can enhance thee more.

'Twas when thy country, looted of its hoard —
When treason sapped its heart-blood and its
life —

That thou didst touch the well-spring with thy
wand,

And from it gushed the vital stream that saved.
And though thy country's deepest, foulest stain
Must needs be washed away in blood and tears,

* A serious illness.

The fettered have been freed, and hushed the
din

Of curséd war, whose awful uproar once
Convulsed the troubled land from sea to sea.
Saved is the State, and hostile cannon now
Are moulded into pyramids of peace!

And lo, the temple thou hast helped to rear
To justice long by fate denied, now marks
The uplift of a race enslaved

Toward the birth-born, blood-gained rights of
man.

Old friend,
Thy well-earned rest has come. A grateful
State

Whose weal was known, and served so long, so
well,

E'en now would lay fresh garlands on thy brow;
But needing nought to make thy fame endure,
It prays that thou shalt have forevermore,
That lasting peace thou hast for others won!

THE WOODS

Fain to the vaulted woods I go, where solitude
doth reign,
And seat me on some lichened rock — a brief
surcease to gain —
From turmoil of the market-place, where greed
with covin vies,
And human souls are bought and sold, as well
as merchandise.

Here would I breathe the balsamed air, the
freshness of the trees,
And listen to the song of birds, and hum of
gathering bees;
Ah, here is peace, supernal peace, a paradise
regained,

Where every care of life is lost, and blissful rest
attained.

Here spread the hemlock's feathery wings; here
lift the stately pines;
And here the birches whiter seem, by ruddy,
clinging vines;
Here, too, the fruitful chestnuts tower, and in
the lengthening year,
With bursting burrs and shining nuts the
scampering squirrels cheer.

On yonder spruce, now spectral grown, and aged
with countless ills,
The lone woodpecker urgent raps — then listens
where he drills —
To hear the toiling insect stir, where strips of
bark yet cling,
Then raps again till one is found, then flies on
fleeter wing.

I hear the cawing crows above, that fly against
the breeze,
And then the locust's ceaseless chirr that comes
from distant trees;
The nimble chipmunk's call I hear, that brings
her wandering young,
To share with her some early nut, now dropt
from where it clung.

Where yonder tasseled alders grow, with pussy-
willows near,
A gurgling rill meanders by to lull the wearied
ear,
Whose murmuring voice is half suppressed by
low, o'erhanging banks,
Which marvel at its tortuous course, and other
playful pranks.

The trillium and anemone, throughout each
summer day,

Waft their sweet kisses back and forth across
the rippling way;

And thinking they are quite unseen, they give
the world no thought,

But mirrored in that tell-tale brook are all
their amours caught.

But hark! I hear the partridge drum, to call his
absent mate;

And then the silver-throated thrush his ecstacies
relate.

The veeries and the vireos make all the woods
rejoice,

And rapture comes when whippoorwills add
their exultant voice.

Thus Nature's untrained orchestra doth cheer
the pensive soul,

And countless other joys are found to comfort
and console;

And while a grateful memory clings to trans-
ports that have passed,
If some, perchance, shall be forgot, these sure
shall be the last.

THE RETURN

From native village, years away,
I once more trod its lonely street
The morning of a summer's day,
Nor saw one face to know and greet.

And here, anon, I paused to view
Some once-familiar spot, but lo,
No trace remained of what I knew,
For all had vanished long ago.

I crossed the bridge where once the stream
Ran deep and dark and hurriedly,
But now I saw — how like a dream —
Its waters ripple languidly.

I sought, near by, the school-house where
In torment of captivity,
The droning, dawdling days spent there
Were to me like eternity.

Though here I'd bent to many a task
Throughout my boyhood, year by year,
Desertion stared, and seemed to ask:
"What *stranger* is now sauntering here?"

Hard by, the "meeting-house" still stood
Where on each Sabbath old and young
Met as in common brotherhood
To worship God with reverent tongue.

How memory now brought to my view
Those childhood friends I here had known —
All seated in the same old pew
As if, since then, no years had flown.

Of these, methought, how many score
Had, in their last majestic state,
Been borne from out its ample door
To pass, nay more, yon churchyard gate.

I entered there among the dead,
And strolled past many a chiselled stone
At which I paused and slowly read
The name of some remembered one.

Such caravan of years had passed
Since I this hallowed ground had trod,
'Twas now a teeming city massed
With those whose souls repose with God.

With sadder heart I wandered through
The neighboring aisles still narrower,
That I might find, and once more view,
The sacred spot where kindred were,

When lo, I saw uprising near,
A shaft from spotless marble hewed —
Pure as an angel's frozen tear —
Fit emblem of their lives renewed.

Though sadder made by lingering here,
Regretfully I onward passed,
The more, because I could but fear
That this brief view might be my last.

Yet be it so, 'tis joy to know
That here such benedictions rest —
Where flowers of sweeter fragrance grow,
In tribute to the loved and blest —

Where blithesome birds that gladden spring,
Renounce their earlier-chosen ways,
And hither fly, on fleeter wing,
To sing their sweetest roundelays;

And where, forsaking other bowers,
The humming-birds and honey bees
Bring sweets first drawn from other flowers
To dwell more blissful here with these,

Where mingled with the birds of song
They find delight unknown before,
And my entreaty would prolong
Their visitation evermore.

THE PATRIARCH OAK

Surmounting lofty crags and cliffs,
And bent by Time's remorseless blast,
An ancient oak its form uplifts,
Defiant now as through the past.

And here, on Horicon's wild shore,
It gazes back on centuries,
And through a life of twenty score
Of years replete with memories.

Hard by, a younger oak doth stand —
Fit offspring of this noble sire —
Prepared to stretch its helpful hand
Should failing strength its aid require.

And tongued with Nature's mystic words,
They closer lean as they commune,
While in their shade the grateful herds
Repose through afternoons of June.

One day, the scion speaking, said:
"Thou, sire, dost seem the oldest here;
Bent is thy form and gray thy head,
And death, e'en now, may loiter near,

"For in the last relentless storm,
Oft didst thou groan as if in pain;
Enraged it shook thy quivering form,
And well-nigh laid thee with the slain.

"While yet thy thews are tough and strong,
With mind composed and memory clear,
Relate at length, in prose or song,
The early scenes enacted here,

“When in that primal solitude
Which knew no voice, nor scarce a sound
Throughout its vast infinitude
All Nature seemed but more profound.”

“On such a theme I fain would dwell,”
Replied the Patriarch of old,
“And ere I’m called to bid farewell,
My willing story shall be told.”

And it spoke not a language rude
Like that of wild-men it had heard,
But one the Dryads understood,
Which bore no sound, yet never erred.

So, on that reminiscent day,
The Patriarch its silence broke,
And in a grave, impressive way
Discoursed at length, and thus it spoke:

“Long ere the white man found his way
To these forbidding solitudes,
The baneful savage here held sway —
Involved in ceaseless tribal feuds.

“And here he fought his mortal foes
So long as yet survived a brave,
And every root beneath me knows
And wanders to some sachem's grave.

“So if till now I have been spared,
(Though centuries I can retrace)
It is because my sinews shared
The vigor of that virile race.

“Then, silence here was so profound
That even Nature seemed oppressed,
And as if grateful for the sound
That roused her from that languid rest,

“As when some towering forest tree
Long rent by tempests, year by year,
Fell prostrate mid the earth’s debris,
And crashing, startled every ear;

“Or when some furious wind-storm swept
The slumbering lake with loud uproar,
The waves, like frenzied chargers leapt,
And broke in fragments on its shore;

“Or when some famished wild-beast caught
The trail to which a scent still clung,
With prey at bay, it snarled and fought
To rob some mother of her young,

“For where in safety children share
Their joyful pastimes of to-day,
Then roamed the panther, wolf and bear,
Relentless in their search of prey.

“But fiercer than the famished beast —
Whose lust for blood no hand could stay —
Were those red demons, when, unleashed,
They sprang from ambush for the fray.

“And through those years of endless strife,
Scant was the spot on this fair shore
Which tomahawk and scalping-knife
Had not oft stained with human gore.

“But long at rest, those warring braves —
The Algonquins and Iroquois —
Have slumbered in their sunken graves,
No more their ambush to employ.

“The first white man to venture here
Was Father Jogues, by Jesuits sent —
A missionary pioneer —
Who called the lake ‘Saint Sacrament.’

“And here that pious man long dwelt
To teach the Indians Christian faith,
Not knowing, when in prayer he knelt,
What hand might deal an instant death.*

“Long here the French and English fought —
Their royal standards to uprear —
But by vain struggle they were taught
That empires were exotic here.

“On yonder field their legions met
And clenched like athletes for the fray,
Where Dieskau gained the first onset,
But Johnson later won the day.

“And leading where no other dared,
Intrepid Williams, ambushed, fell,
Of whose brave men scarce one was spared
The horrors of the scene to tell —

* He fell a martyr to the faith in 1646, being brutally murdered by the Mohawks, among whom he was then laboring as missionary.

“Where noble Hendrick, too, was led
To perish in that slaughter-pen,
Where he was found strewn with the dead
Which filled, breast-high, that sombre glen.

“I saw the valiant troops of France
Sail through the lake in proud array,
When Montcalm made his bold advance,
And savage allies led the way —

“The way to where they saw afar
Fort William Henry, bastion-walled,
At whose unsparing massacre
Humanity has stood appalled;

“Where thirst for blood was only quenched
By tomahawking every brain,
Until the death-strewn soil was drenched
By dripping piles of mangled slain.

“I later saw the buoyant troops
Of Abercrombie’s mighty fleet,
When through the lake his crowded sloops
Bore on his men to doomed defeat.

“That spectacle no pen forgets,
Where banners waved with flags uprun
Mid flashing arms and bayonets,
Resplendent in that July sun.

“No eye discerned that awful fate
Which soon, too soon, they were to know,
When those who now were so elate
Were to go down before the foe,

“Where thrice, those legions — strong and
brave —
’Gainst Montcalm’s serried lines were thrown,
To meet repulse and find a grave,
But make that field a Marathon.

“And where thine eyes are resting now,
Near yonder field of waving grain,
All England’s pride — the peerless Howe —
First fell among his gallant slain.

“Ticonderoga — that stronghold —
Was won and lost, and won again,
And by its fate alike was told
The gain or loss of Lake Champlain,

“Where Allen won immortal fame
By taking with his doughty band
(And in the Great Jehovah’s name)
The fortress and its whole command;

“When England first was made to feel,
In that brief hour of dawning light,
What blows Green Mountain Boys could deal
When armored in the cause of right.

“Hard by, were Arnold’s vessels built
 (If built they were when half complete)
With which that traitor, ere his guilt,
 At Valcour fought the British fleet;

“Where, manned by those intrepid sons,
 E’en with a fleet so crudely wrought,
He well-nigh silenced Carleton’s guns —
 Near twice his own — for Spartans fought —

“Fought to the last expiring breath
 To rend their shackles and be free,
And welcomed nought so much as death,
 If vassals they must longer be —

“Nay, fought as only those can fight,
 Who, writhing ’neath a despot’s heel,
Rise up at last in awful might,
 And make to God their last appeal.

“And later still I heard the roar
Of distant guns that anxious day,
When England sought, as at Valcour,
To worst our fleet at Plattsburg Bay,

“But where her vaunted ships instead
Were crushed as tigers crush their prey,
Till torn and tattered to a shred,
They struck their colors in dismay;

“Where scornful England soon was taught
Her impotency on the wave,
And that where'er McDonough fought,
There, too, she'd find a waiting grave.

“War's ugly sound so constant here
Throughout those tragic days of yore,
No longer plagues the harassed ear,
For peace now gladdens every shore,

“And where imperial armies fought
To gain this virgin continent,
A providential Hand hath wrought
A free, benignant government,

“Whose sovereign is the people’s will,
Expressed by all, denied to none;
And here the conflict raged until
That righteous cause at last was won.

“And here was planted and enshrined
The sacred tree of Liberty,
Whose outstretched branches, intertwined,
Are sought by all humanity.

“So here upon this hallowed ground

“But death’s approach I feel is near
 (For now my strength is waning fast)
And when I go will disappear
 Those sires of whom I am the last.

“Thou shalt live on, and living see
 The baneful savage nevermore;
Where curled the smoke from his tepee,
 From workshop now it doth outpour;

“And where his dreaded war-whoop broke
 The spell of Nature’s reverie,
There now is heard the anvil-stroke,
 And ceaseless whirr of industry.

“Nought, nought remains where once he trod,
 To tell that he abided here,
Save the rude flint, turned with the sod,
 And soon this, too, shall disappear.

“Farewell! May Heaven thy years prolong,
Yet not more curséd war to see
Save to redress some grievous wrong,
But lasting peace thy country's be!”

SLEEP

O Sleep, whose subtle anodynes
Doth drug the sentries of the soul
To hold an hostage for repose;
That with fresh-minted coin doth fill
Exhausted Nature's empty purse,
Thou art life's sovereign comforter,
That respite brings to drudging toil,
To brooding care, and throbbing grief.
There is no pain thou canst not soothe;
No anguish thou canst not assuage.
Impartial, too, thy boon is given,
For both to peasant and to king,
To those in gladness or despair,
Thou art the equal almoner.
Inconstant as the rainbow's hue,

And moved by nought save thy caprice,
No malediction can coerce,
Nor supplication lure thee on.
But when thy visitation comes,
The sceptred soul abjures its throne
And kneels a vassal at thy feet.
The boisterous pulse of life is calmed;
The tumult of the world is hushed;
Oblivion throws its mantle o'er
The graven tablets of the brain,
And fancy's noiseless loom then weaves
From languor's skein of tangled thread
The wondrous tapestry of dreams.

THE MONARCH

Tempus edax rerum

Behold! — the Monarch, Time, am I,
Whom none shall balk, nor dare deny.
The oldest sovereign of the earth
Found me entrenched here at his birth,
For long ere mortal crown was worn,
Or king or potentate was born,
The mandates from my ancient throne
Resounded here from zone to zone.
Thus I'm supreme in every clime
Though deeds like mine are made a crime
If done, perchance, by human hand —
An outlaw made throughout the land.
And though man execrates my deeds,

And piteously for mercy pleads,
What care I what his praise may be,
Or his anathema of me?
Since neither blandishment nor curse
Can ever coax me or coerce.

My mission here is to despoil —
To do it well, my only toil —
So well, indeed, that nevermore
Shall that thing live that lived before,
And envy tells no rival how
To snatch the laurel from my brow.

And would'st thou know what I've achieved?
Ask the despairing — the bereaved —
Recount the races, puissant, vast,
That roamed the earth in ages past,
The outlines of whose crumbling tomb
Are lost in ever-deepening gloom.

That I am partial to no friend
Or spite a foe, none will contend.
I *have* no friend, but half my foes
Would outcount flakes of Arctic snows.
Because my victims well obey,
(Oft with scant time to kneel and pray)
No armies I employ to awe,
Or force submission to my law,
Yet Christian lands denounce me when
Their thrones drip with the blood of men.

I delve at noonday and at night,
(For my vocation needs no light)
And on with muffled feet I stride
As noiseless as the lifting tide,
And wake not those who, if they sleep,
May cease for one brief hour to weep.
And since hale youth is ever mine,
Of weariness I show no sign
At close of day, nor yet the year,
In loading death upon my bier,

Nor reaching down into the grave
To turn to dust what Nature gave.

Behold my work already done
With yet my purpose scarce begun!
Where tropic suns now smite the earth,
Gleamed icebergs once, of ponderous girth;
Where ocean billows once lept high,
Now Chimborazo cleaves the sky;
Where primal Rome was hewn and reared,
Five Romes in turn have disappeared;
Where Carthage held imperial sway,
Wild forest beasts now seek their prey,
And where loomed Karnak's mighty walls,
The sluggish reptile creeps and crawls —
All ages past to me appear
Like yesterdays, and quite as near.

The lord of skies and seas and lands,
I spare no work of human hands.
The sculptured forms by genius wrought,

The monuments where heroes fought,
The courts where kings look down from thrones,
The pantheons where lie their bones,
The fanes upreared by pious hands,
The pyramids on Egypt's sands —
Where mouldering Pharoah mummies lie
Concealed to cheat my searching eye —
Man's castles and his rustic homes,
His temples with their gilded domes,
His campaniles and his towers
Where tolls the knell of passing hours;
His treasures, trophies, battle-won,
His states and empires, one by one,
Alike shall perish with the rest,
And turn to dust, at my behest.

Yet mark, withal, what still shall be,
And nought can frustrate my decree.
Proud Ætna's flames no more shall burn,
Nor glaciers freeze and melt in turn;

Unfathomed oceans, dark and drear,
Shall vanish like a transient tear;
To nebulae I'll change the earth
And thus restore its primal dearth;
I'll pluck the planets from the skies,
(Which dazzle now man's wondering eyes)
And then blot out the blazing sun
And turn to vapor, whence begun;
Then, midst the ruin I have wrought,
And desolation — nothing aught —
Behold me seated on my throne —
A Monarch still — though left alone!

ON A DEW DROP

What is that chaste, that sparkling thing,
Which to the rose at dawn doth cling,
And nestled to its throbbing breast,
Plays ardent lover while a guest?

'Tis but a tear of weeping night —
The weeping of a glad delight —
Till startled by obtruding day,
Night, fearing capture, steals away.

ODE TO A BULLFINCH

A captive made, as if some baneful beast
And not the inoffending thing thou art,
'Tis strange that thou shouldst still have heart
for song,

Or evermore disport, or blithesome be,
Afar from groves that sheltered thee when
young,

Where still thy kindred in their freedom dwell
And harken for thy voice — thy fate unknown —
Disheartened at thy absence, so prolonged.
Full much my guilty heart doth me reproach
When I reflect what unprovokéd wrong
My selfish greed has done thee, gentle one,
The more because thou knowest well my deed,

Which deeper makes regret that not atones.
Yet, no resentment plagues thy placid breast,
Such as, for half thy cause, man would avenge,
But, unlike him, a guerdon thou dost give
By gladdening all the day with such rare song
As would dishearten sirens should they hear,
Or nightingale mistake for some lost mate.
But lo, the tranquil twilight hour has come —
All-hallowed by the vesper thou hast sung —
And I must bid thee loath farewell till morn.
Till then, may peace pervade the downy breast
Which folds that all-forgiving heart of thine —
Peace undeserved by that one robbed of me!

A GENTLE MAIDEN DO I KNOW

A gentle maiden do I know

Who so bewilders human eyes,

That when beheld, it seems as though

One angel less dwelt in the skies.

In her so much of the divine

Is shown in her seraphic face,

'Twere fitting that by Heaven's design

Her home should be some holy place.

Her smile is like a radiant flower —

The blossom of her blithesome heart —

One unconstrained, and borne each hour

By native grace that knows no art.

Her lips are like two rosebuds grown
In touch upon a single stem,
Which, when she smiles, burst forth full-
blown —
Sunshine itself seems born of them.

Her voice is softer than that heard
When doves croon to their helpless young,
With pathos of some mate-lost bird
Whose plaint till then had been unsung.

Her eyes are that celestial blue
That deepens with the summer shower,
And would by tenderness subdue
All threat of dark and evil power.

Her blush is like a damask rose
Concealed in some vine-tangled wall,
But when exposed, benignly throws
Its prisoned glory over all.

In her all graces are so blent
In one embodied loveliness,
That on her one could gaze content
Through life — if he could not caress!

AN AMORETTE

The favoring stars shine o'er my head,
For now the lingering day hath fled,
Whose loitering hours seemed years to me,
Because they held me far from thee.

Behold, and with compassion's eyes,
Thy lover who with longing sighs,
And hear the message of his heart,
Which of thine own seems but a part.

That message is its fervent prayer,
Which long repressed, still smothers there,
Yet shouldst thou hear it with disdain,
Love's quenchless fire would still remain.

But helpless as Prometheus bound,
And like him, bleeding with my wound,
I bring to thee a heart aglow,
That my wild passion thou shalt know,

Which thirsts thee as the burning plain
Thirsts for the long-belated rain,
With love as pure, and strong, and deep,
As Gulf Stream currents where they sweep.

Some fairy would I gladly be,
To serve thy bidding constantly —
To shield thee from all evil eyes,
And guard thy self-made paradise;

I'd lure the birds from chosen climes
To sing for thee their sweetest rhymes,
For thy rare beauty would inspire
Their raptured souls with that desire.

Unseen, I'd watch the gathering bee,
And where he sipped I'd pluck for thee
The sweetest flowers that bud and bloom,
To shed round thee their rare perfume.

I'd guard thy slumbers through the night,
And prompt for thee dreams of delight —
Dreams of some far-off world of bliss,
For thou wert made too pure for this.

O harken, I implore thee now
To that heart-longing I avow,
Then but one favoring smile bestow,
And teach me heaven's own joy to know,

Or if, when thou art wrapped in sleep,
One tender thought of me may creep
Into thy visions, unsuppressed,
In rapture, then, this heart shall rest!

CAPTIVITY

Thy tender, thoughtful, earnest eyes —
Within their tranquil depths there lies
A magic power, unknown to thee,
That chains me in captivity.

The morning light the brighter grows
Wherever their effulgence flows,
And e'en at night, their potent ray
Converts the darkness into day —

A day so bright with their own light
That should each star and satellite,
Nay, every planet cease to blaze,
Night's darkest hours would rival day's.

So would ones pathway through the years
Of life's contending hopes and fears,
Be made one blissful, hallowed spell,
Should such supernal light there dwell.

I THINK OF THEE

I think of thee when, dim and gray,
Belated, drowsy night is roused,
And loath to go, half-clad and slow,
Recedes before advancing day.

I think of thee when anxious care
Enslaves me through the drudging day,
But toil were sweet, with joy replete,
Could I for thee my burdens bear.

I think of thee with fonder heart
When Day, embracing timid Night,
Prolongs his kiss of rapturous bliss
Like lovers when enforced to part.

And when, at last, I seek repose,
On thee my craving dreams still feast,
Yet when I wake and dreams forsake,
My yearning but intenser grows.

Thus throbs my heart unceasingly
From dawn to dark, from dark to dawn,
In wild desire, a quenchless fire,
Till smothered by eternity!

A MEMORY

I gazed on such a beauteous face,
And form of such surpassing grace,
That had some genius e'er portrayed
The peerless creature I surveyed,
Then would the lustre of his name
Have brighter made the page of fame.

While thus I gazed, intent, beguiled,
The face, as if unconscious, smiled,
When o'er a harp flew two white hands
Like mated swallows o'er the sands.
Methought what wondrous magic brings
Such melting strains from those mute strings!

But Nature had no gift denied,
Or grace, where countless others vied,

For when she sang, methought such notes
Could only come from angel throats,
Since nought but those could ever bear
The sweetness of the ones heard there.

First came the warble of a bird;
Then but a human voice was heard;
Then some still more impassioned strain
Infused my pulse, and thrilled my brain —
As o'er the strand the billows roll,
These lapped and laved my raptured soul.

But vain indeed it were to ask
Of artist hand — unequal task —
To counterfeit the grace divine
Embodied there in every line,
For e'en had Raphael sought to trace
The beauty of that form and face,
The vision would have dazed his brain,
And moveless must his hand have lain!

THE SLUGGARD

God help the man, in all whose days,
No worthy deed is found to praise;
Who has in life no aim or end
Beyond the pleasures it may lend;
Who never soiled his palms by work,
And never will, if he can shirk;
Who with no useful calling learned
Has never yet a dollar earned;
Who shifts and shirks whate'er he can,
Imposing on his fellowman
The burdens they alike should bear,
And have for him no thought or care —
Who wears the latest cut in clothes
And for each stitch, his tailor owes;
Who asks you for "just one more loan,"

Yet to repay one, ne'er was known;
Who deems life a consummate bore,
And each day worse than that before,
Yet, like a spendthrift, seeks to borrow
For use to-day, hours of the morrow;
Who every font of pleasure dries,
And no voluptuous sense denies —
A drifting hulk on life's high sea,
Attainr with moral leprosy —
God help, I say, this worthless man;
No other will; He only can!

UNDAUNTED

Day, lingering in the darkening West
Lifts high the taper in his hand,
Whose purple rays benignly rest,
Where hurrying Night shall straightway
stand.

Throughout the heaven's vaulted height
Hang twilight lamps, now burning low,
Which, as they spy the goddess, Night,
Salute her with their brightest glow.

She, stealing from her curtained bowers,
Where resting she hath hidden lain,
Resumes her vigil through the hours
To guard, in turn, Day's vast domain.

Together, they, like sentinels,
Patrolled the centuries that were,
Which, huddled in their mouldy cells
Now rest in Time's vast sepulchre.

Since parting at primeval dawn
When last he saw her beauteous face,
Day hath pursued this nimble fawn
With longing heart, and eager pace.

Unwearied by his futile chase;
Undaunted, too, by cruel fate,
But yearning for one fond embrace,
Each morn he bursts the Orient gate.

His passion now resistless grown,
He throws his arms from roseate bowers,
But timid Night, alert, hath flown;—
Behold! her tears drip from the flowers.

ACROSS THE STREET

To club-house loiterers who, *en masse*,
Stare out at maidens as they pass —
That noonday throng, just out of bed,
Which turns its eyes, but not its head —
All prinked and plumed for the parade
In tailored suits — half “ready made” —
To prurient loiterers such as these,
No earthly pageant could so please.

But now and then a clubless man
May have his day Elysian,
For as he trudges home at night,
There may from off the car alight,
Just at the corner where he dwells,
Some Aphrodite who excels

The Grecian goddess, both in grace,
And beauty of her classic face;
And then — since things have turned his way —
May learn, perchance, that very day
That this rare maid lives in the *suite*
That faces his, across the street.

Yes, once I met a celibate
(That thing old-maids so deprecate)
Who vouched the truth, as well of this,
As other forms of worldly bliss
To which his fancy strangely clung,
Until the fateful *dénouement*,
Which showed well how, when came the test,
A maiden played the game the best,
And just *how* well she knew the art,
He thus proceeded to impart:

“Once from my window, hour by hour,
I gazed on Nature’s fairest flower;

A creature far more shy than bold,
With glowing cheeks, and hair of gold,
Whose eyes returned the sky's own blue,
Whose lips would shame the poppy's hue,
Whose form, so luscious, ripe and rare
'Twould animate the very air
Through which she moved, with faultless grace,
To hide, at times, her roguish face. —
Who smiled in most bewitching ways,
And each month flirted thirty days
Most ardently, yet so reserved,
That had my bread been likewise served
I should have starved, and no regret,
While gazing on this rare coquette.

“So while this maid, in that coy way,
Thus tortured me from day to day,
I realized how very fine
Grandmother Prude had drawn the line

That tolerated half her wiles
But held us *dumb* as two gargoyles.

“But science, ah, that wondrous thing
May peasant serve, as well as king;
And since dame Grundy, be it known,
Had quite o’erlooked the telephone
(As I had mine, where on the wall
It long had hung without a “call”)
This, I employed from day to day,
(But in no interdicted way)
To sup the nectar, sip by sip,
In accents from her honied lip,
Until my brain took wings and flew
To realms whereof it never knew,
Where sweet communion was maintained
And more than former joys attained,
'Till, Icarus-like, the heated wires
Got melted by our amorous fires,
And when one day, quite unawares,

I dropped to earth to make repairs,
My charmer, with her back-hair down,
And in plain view of half the town,
Serenely stood at her front door,
There *flirting with my janitor!*"

CLARK AND THE OREGON

The Oregon at anchor lay within the Golden Gate,

And far remote from surging waves — a thing inanimate —

When came an order — urgent, brief — to
“*Make for Callao,*”

And there await, for war might be, and with no dastard foe.

“*All hands to anchor!*” shouted Clark; then
tugged each groaning chain,

And ere the night that battleship was ploughing through the main.

And from that grave and anxious hour, for tidings still to learn,

She rushing, left her foaming wake for nigh a
league astern.

Along Pacific's coast she sped, as ship ne'er
sped before,

Led by the Southern Cross whose beam each
wave in sequence bore.

Callao reached, late orders read, "*At once for
Rio sail,*" —

Then on she swept like mountain mist before
a furious gale,

And through Magellan's hungry jaws — more
dreaded than armed foes —

Till safe beyond their reefs and rocks, three
lusty cheers arose.

What, though Cervera's fleet were met? —
what, though in wait it lay? —

This made him but more daring, and more
eager for the fray.

What, though the crew keen hunger felt, and
knew nor sleep nor rest,

If yielding what they needed most, would serve
their country best?

The sturdy stokers, nigh outworn, still fiercer
kept their fires,

And not a man, though parched with thirst,
once stopped to quench desires.

The North Star now, from realms afar, intenser
made its ray —

That beacon which the brightest burns when
lighting Freedom's way;

And toward its beam, through battering seas,
the battleship swept on,

While Clark stood constant on the bridge, and
watched for lurking Don.

At length she entered Rio's port, where late
dispatches bore

News that the dogs of war were loosed, and
bayed along our shore,

When like a meteor she swept on to join our
fleet that lay

At Santiago's armored gate, where it held Spain
at bay.

The engineers, unconscious grown by stifling
air, alack,

Borne to the deck and half restored, tried hard
to stagger back;

And though this sovereign of the sea, five thou-
sand leagues had run,

This paragon of battleships, as fresh as when
begun,

With Clark at helm, and crew elate — this more
than welcome guest —

Unhalting, pushed to Sampson's line, then
proved herself his best!

That Sabbath morn had calmly dawned, and
through the languid air

Came far, faint sounds of convent bells, that
called to anxious prayer;

But Oh! what crashing thunders break, when
now the foemen meet!

For look you there, on swiftly comes Cervera's
doughty fleet,

Defiant, and with war-like mien, out through
the narrow bay!

All-desperate now, they open fire, and force the
awful fray,

But Sampson's roaring guns reply, "*You're
welcome here, come on!*" —

When furies of a thousand hells were gathered
here in one!

Through smoke and fume the battle waged, and
every missile sent,

Was planted where it counted most, and where
the gunners meant,

When, leading all, the Oregon dashed swiftly
to the van,

And raked and riddled with her shells each
deck where dared a man,

While Clark forgot his conning-tower where
danger was the least,

And on his forward turret stood where danger
never ceased.

The Spaniards read their tragic fate in their
doomed cruisers' light,

Which all aflame, dashed on the shore, glad to
give up the fight.

Henceforth, on fame's eternal page, the Oregon
will shine,

And Clark — that brave "Green-Mountain
Boy" — will be in every line;

That hill-born hero of the waves, whose name
revered will be,

So long as valor has a place in annals of the
sea!

Elsewhere ones rank depends on kings, whose
whim makes "noble blood,"

But Clark was not that way endowed — *his*
knighthood came from God —
The kind that captured old "Fort Ti.," and
won at Bennington,
Where grand old Stark the Hessians fought,
and drove from every gun.
And so where Clark shall have command — that
leader true and brave —
From every mast, on every breeze, "Old Glory"
still shall wave!

CHILDHOOD'S DREAM

Ah, blessed was that childhood day
When with sweet Alice, blithe and gay,
We tripped adown the country lane —
Her hand in mine — her gallant swain.

O, she was more than Saxon fair
With sunbeams nestled in her hair,
While from her tranquil, deep-blue eyes,
Outshone a gleam of Paradise.

Her lips were like twin rubies set
With pearls between — I see them yet —
As when she, blushing bashfully,
Said: "I love you, if you love me."

I answered in no doubting way,
Down in the lane that joyful day;
And our two hearts thence beat as one,
And few were hours they beat alone.

No threatening cloud or gathering mist
E'er darkened this our childhood tryst,
But every sun shone full and fair,
More than content to linger there.

We loved as only children love
When mated first in Heaven above,
Whose gracious smile was on us cast
And in whose beam our joys were passed.

Life then was one sweet reverie;
Its rhythm one fond melody;
That melody one gentle voice
Whose accents bade my heart rejoice.

But lo! what grief soon pierced my heart
And sent its pang to every part,
When illness came, and Alice died,
And wondering angels turned and sighed.

And since that day, how anxiously
I've tried to solve that mystery —
To learn why buds are made to bloom,
Then, ere their fruitage, reach their doom —

Why childhood, fresh and fair and pure,
Should be the one for death to lure,
While age is left to totter through.
Allotted years concealed from view.

Life's noon had passed ere once again
I wandered through that hallowed lane,
But lo, how changed! — few signs it bore
That I had known the place before.

I sought the humble cottage near,
Which all my childhood was so dear,
But found it not; where once it stood
Were tangled weeds, and fire-charred wood.

With saddened heart I turned to go,
But spied, hard by, a headstone low,
Whereat I paused, and through my tears,
Read — "Here lies Alice: aged ten years."

WILLIAM McKINLEY

True to each trust, and best when trusted most;
For country first, though facing war or peace;
Making in peace its greatness greater still,
While yet in war, his young, intrepid breast,
On many a blood-soaked, death-strewn battle-
field

Was bared to shield a Nation's heart from
harm.

Gentle, strong; courageous, just; he walked
erect

The paths of righteousness whereon was thrown
The radiant light of his unsullied soul —
The emanation of creative Heaven.
This peerless man, by fate ordained to lead,

And lift mankind to more exalted heights,
Alas! by Anarch's venom'd fang lies slain!
And when he fell, a Nation mute with woe
Stood dazed and awestruck at his bier, and lo,
Beyond the seas, e'en to remotest lands,
Unbidden tears and solemn-tolling bells
Bespoke an anguish deep as was our own.
That blameless life; that apt, sagacious tongue,
(Which ne'er was heard save for his country's
weal)
Though hushed on earth forevermore, yet speak
As with an angel's trumpet and declare
That, in the precious lesson he bequeathed,
The better life is lingering with us still.

September, 1901.

1849

DESTINY

As I strolled past an ancient hall,
With ivied tower, and vine-clad wall,
A beauteous rose peered through the maze
Whereat I paused and fixed my gaze.

Though tremulous, as if through fear,
It seemed to whisper to come near,
And bending low to catch each word,
This was the touching plaint I heard:

“Once I with happy comrades dwelt
Where ne’er a stranger’s hand was felt —
In far-off fields where wild-woods twine —
Companioned with the herds and kine.

“Forever free from toil and care,
With naught but pleasure for our share,
We dreamed the tranquil hours away,
Throughout each languid, summer day.

“Of danger then we had no thought,
For by no others were we sought
Than by the birds and honey bees,
And butterflies, and friends like these.

“But now, how changed! Where'er we bloom
We're sure to find our early doom;
No more for us the happy hours
Once shared in those secluded bowers.

“Here did I have a gentle mate,
Whose love for me was passing great,
But ere it had become half grown,
I was despoiled and left alone;

“For while the thorns that guard each flower
True to their trust, enforce their power,
Yet would some ruthless hand each day
Pluck off and bear our best away —

“Away to where some care-worn face —
Familiar at the market-place —
By waiting long, and selling low,
Prolongs a half-fed life of woe;

“Or where, within the footlight’s glare,
’Tis nightly hurled in places where
Some soubrette holds a motley throng
With flippant jest and ribald song;

“Or where it droops in worse despair
When tangled in some harlot’s hair,
And through a long, revolting night,
Would languish, fade and die affright;

“Or where it decks the trembling bride,
When kneeling at the altar side —
Fit symbol of a purer love
Descended here from realms above;

“Or where some heart-crushed mother weeps
For her beloved, who lifeless sleeps,
It fain would have her silent prayer
Ascend on incense it sheds there.”

Thus spoke that inoffending rose
Which told its pleasures and its woes.
But of its mate, what fate befell,
Or good or ill, what tongue shall tell!

THE OLD YEAR

The Old Year, burdened with his spoil,
Stole off, and staggered as he strode,
For he was wearied by the toil
By which he'd gained his ponderous load.
Yet, never halting in his quest,
(As if his victims were too few)
He forward on his mission pressed
As if fresh fields were still in view.
He bore a desperado's mien
As he stalked on exultingly,
For in his demon eye was seen
The marks of sleepless revelry;
Nay, everywhere his visage told
The tale of long debauchery,
Yet with a lust still uncontrolled,

He hungered for satiety.
His field had been that one wherein
All seasons bore but ripened grain;
Where youth and age, where alien, kin,
Alike were garnered in his train.
Unmoved by prayers, or sobs, or tears,
He sought to make his carnival
The mightiest far of all the years,
And count his work the best of all.
Begone, thou heartless reveler,
And hence remain forevermore;
Thy work is one vast sepulchre,
And thou hast closed and sealed the door!

GOD'S HOROLOGUE

God tells the hoary age of earth
In strata formed about its girth:
This horologue, wound by His hand,
Is such that all may understand.

But in its workings — wondrous, vast —
Recurring seasons as they passed
Were as mere seconds in the score,
And centuries counted scarcely more.

And after eons shall have flown,
Its age shall even then be known,
For found beneath this mundane sod,
Will be that same time-piece of God.

DISILLUSION

O could I once bring back again those happy
childhood hours,
Made joyful by a sweet content, amid youth's
budding flowers,
Till in my sleep, some roving nymph sought my
confiding ear,
And whispered there enchanting tales that
dazzled me to hear.

Ere then, no restless discontent had plagued
my tranquil peace,
Or ventured to molest the spell where joy had
no surcease;
For life was at its morning then, and its be-
nignant light

Encompassed me at noonday, and tinged my
dreams at night.

But I was promised power and fame, and cof-
fers piled with gold,

And palaces as gorgeous as the Doges had of
old,

Adorned with treasures, quaint and rare — the
spoil of every land —

With retinues and willing slaves, to serve my
least command.

Nay, that henceforth my life should be like some
luxurious dream —

One never known to those who toil, o'er whom
I was supreme —

For I to princely rule was born — confided to
me then —

Because my veins coursed noble blood, not that
of common men.

Nay more, that kingdoms I should have — vast
 empires in domain —
O'er which, like potentates of old, in glory I
 should reign,
And that my courts and pageants should in
 splendor far outvie
The proudest pomp of other lands, and dazzle
 every eye.

But lo! I was not told the cost of all that pomp
 and power;
That I'd be robbed of all my peace from that
 ill-fated hour,
Or that I nevermore should feel my childhood
 heart aglow
With transports which till then I'd known, but
 all be changed to woe.

No kingdoms yet have come to me, nor palaces,
 nor gold,

Which on that night were plighted me, though
now I have grown old.

Yet patiently I've waited through the unre-
quiting years,

And watched with eager, longing eyes, and often
through my tears —

Tears for those heart-remembered joys that
sweet contentment gave

Before ambition bound me, as its helpless, cring-
ing slave;

For dearer far than kingdoms, or palaces, or
gold,

Were those lost days of sweet content, — the
childhood days of old!

AN EPITHALAMIUM

Since Eden's pair, that primal morn,
First kindled love's consuming flame,
The millions that have since been born
Have played, in turn, the same old game.

It matters not that Eden lies
Amid a far-off hemisphere,
Since *love* alone makes Paradise,
Where springtime lingers all the year.

Ring out the merry marriage bell!
Twine garlands round the bride to-day,
For none who heard her vows shall tell
That *this* fair one balked at "*obey*"!

All hail with glad and joyful hymn;
 Drink health and luck to bride and groom,
And fill your beakers to the brim,
 Then every ruddy drop consume!

MONT BLANC

Eternal mount, whose brow serene
Is pillowed on the clouds, half-seen,
What longing thy abode inspires
In human hearts — what vast desires!

'Tis not decreed that mortal clod
Should dwell on earth, and still with God,
But thou, reared from an earthly vale,
Dost in supernal realms regale.

And then, as if thou hadst a soul
Pervading the celestial goal,
Thou hast attained the crown which now
Triumphant rests upon thy brow.

And lo, throughout the silent night,
The drifting snows pile height on height,
And thus renewed from day to day,
It ne'er shall fade, or pass away,

But brightly from those realms divine
Shall ever and forever shine —
A beacon, beaming far and wide,
For weary, wayward feet, a guide.

COLUMBIA
(AN APPEAL FOR CUBA)

O Goddess, turn thy beauteous face
To that fair Isle where dwells a race
Whose plaintive voice, upraised to thee,
Pleads but for righteous liberty!

For since the travail of thy birth,
Of freedom thou hast known the worth,
And at its altar vigil kept
While foes intrenched, and sluggards slept.

The girdle 'neath thy throbbing breast
Was forged from chains of those oppressed;
And stripes upon thy stola — these
Are blood-stains of thy votaries.

The spangled cap that crowns thy head
Was hallowed by the martyr dead,
Who braved and bled, who fought and fell,
That Freedom might survive to tell.

Stretch, then, thy helpful arm to aid
That hapless race, by fate betrayed,
And tear away their loathsome chains,
And tyrants teach that God still reigns!

June, 1898.

TO MARJORIE

(A DÉBUTANTE)

O Marjorie, with brow so fair, and heart so
chaste and pure,
The world adoring thee beholds thy fit invest-
ture,
For thou dost stand in queenly robes — a bride
to coming years —
As smiling Future beckons thee, but leaves the
Past in tears!
O goddess of the present, thou! O vision of
the morrow,
Thy younger comrades bid adieu, with pensive
heart and sorrow.

May every fond, enchanting dream of child-
hood's golden hour

Bring forth its glad reality, and every bud its
flower.

But as life's pathway thou shalt tread, and up
its steeps shalt climb,

Choose for thy comrades Charity, and Hope
and Faith sublime;

Then thou hast taught humanity how justly
thou hast earned

The heavenly radiance from above, that on thy
head is turned.

THE ALCHEMIST

That peerless Alchemist — the heart —
Transcending the magician's art,
Imbues each tear, by passion wrought,
With distillations of our thought.

Hence one emotion-laden tear
Knows more than wisest sage or seer,
Or oceans vast, that ebb and flow,
Of human joy and human woe.

THE FINAL VOYAGE

The night was starless, bleak and drear,
And through the rigging one could hear
Discordant and unceasing moans,
Like those of some dread monster's groans,
As rolled the ship from side to side
Through sea and storm she still defied.

And bravely battling, day by day,
What first was fear, became dismay,
When braver hearts the faint would cheer
Could they suppress their own sad tear,
Lest kindred on the distant shore
Might wait, alas, forevermore.

Beneath the cabin's creaking beam,
In calm repose and joyful dream,
An aged mother, lone and ill,
Throughout the tempest slumbered still,
Whose lamp of life, with fading ray,
Foretold her near and final day.

Long widowed, she had lived to toil
On Scotia's unrequiting soil,
For, one by one, at man's estate,
Their pulses strong, their hearts elate,
Her boys had sought Columbia's shores
Where Plenty smiled from open doors.

And thus, with all life's sunshine lost,
Time touched her with its wilting frost;
Then years grew long, as shadows stray
And lengthen with departing day,
And fondest of her dreams were fain
To greet her precious boys again.

Though tossed by that relentless sea,
She slumbered on in ecstasy —
Still dreaming of her darling boys
And future years of waiting joys,
But ere the long-lost sun arose,
Her soul had fled all earthly woes.

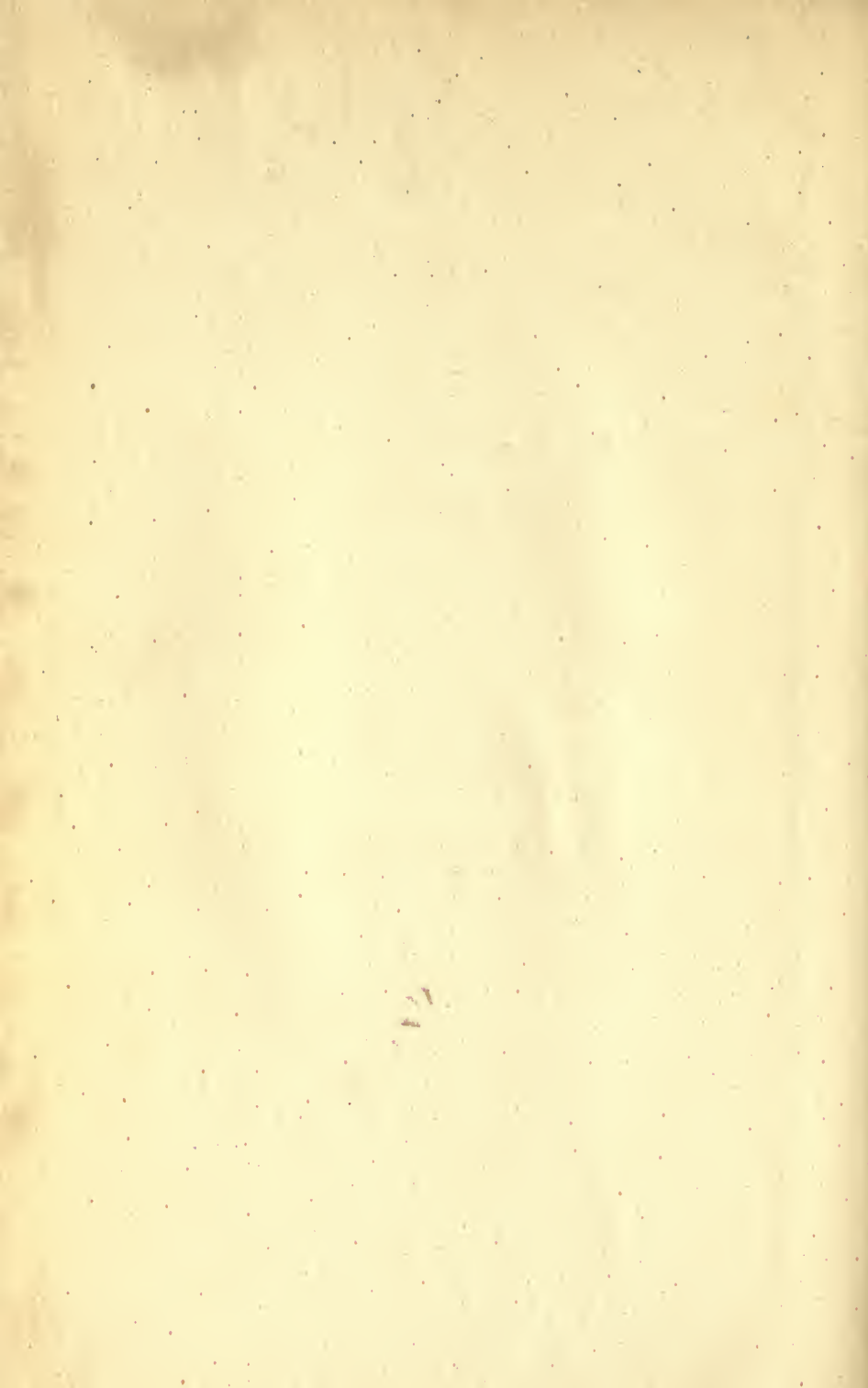
With morning light, in steerage lay —
Its spirit fled — the mortal clay,
And soon the sailors' heavy tread
Bore to the deck the humble dead;
Its shroud — an outworn, offcast sail —
It mattered not what might avail.

And then, submissive to command,
Those brawny sailors, strong of hand,
Committed to the famished wave
That which its hunger seemed to crave,
And lost was that in its embrace,
Whose sepulchre no kin can trace.

For her no tolling bell was heard,
Nor yet by friend a spoken word;
But elsewhere will be tolled a knell
In hearts that still remember well
Their slumbers and their blissful rest
Upon that mother's loving breast.

No pealing anthem there was sung,
Nor praiseful chant of human tongue;
But heard instead will ever be
The murmur of the murmuring sea,
Whose billows will forever roll
A requiem for her peace of soul.





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